

Watch on Red Mail Seen Wasted Effort

A 1962 law that Congress enacted as a partial block to Communist propaganda mailed into this country is hardly worth the time and expense of enforcement, according to the Post Office Department's top lawyer.

Louis J. Doyle, the Department's general counsel, told a House Appropriations subcommittee that many customers have complained and four have gone to court challenging the law as an unconstitutional invasion of privacy.

Three of the cases are now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Exemptions Listed

Testimony of Doyle and other Post Office officials who took part in hearings on the Department's \$5.4-billion budget request for fiscal 1966 was released yesterday.

Under the controversial mail statute, people not covered by exemptions cannot receive third and fourth class mail designated as Communist political propaganda unless they stipulate in writing that they want it.

Exemptions apply to mail addressed to Federal agencies, libraries, colleges, universities, and scientific and professional institutions, Doyle said.

Other addressees get post cards from the Post Office Department notifying them that a Communist tract has been mailed to them. They have the choice of saying whether the publication should be delivered or not.

Considered a Request

"We receive many letters complaining about this procedure," said Doyle. "The general complaint is to the effect that mail matter should be delivered as addressed without any interference."

"When such a letter is received we consider it to be a request, although it is not, that the sender of such a letter desires to receive mail from other countries whether or not it is Communist political propaganda."

Of the 84 million pieces of mail referred to "propaganda units" which were set up at 11 post offices, 10,000 had been withheld from delivery as of last Dec. 31 because the addressees said they didn't want them, Doyle reported.

This operation costs the Post Office Department about \$300,000 a year, said Doyle. He said he could not estimate the cost to the Bureau of Customs, which decides what mail is propaganda.

"In view of the money we are spending on this, and the low number of pieces of mail which we are keeping out of the United States, it does not seem to me to be worthwhile," Doyle told the subcommittee.